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UNCLAS CARACAS 003273

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/PDA LEBENS/BANKS/PROCTOR, WHA/PPC GALLEGOS,
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAO PGOV OPRC PROP VE

SUBJECT: LEAD EDITORIAL IN PRO-CHAVEZ DAILY ATTACKS 'FRAUD'

IN U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

SUMMARY

¶11. The lead editorial in the 10/22 edition of very pro-Chavez daily DIARIO VEA, signed by editor Guillermo Garcia Ponce, accused the followers of President Bush of having committed massive voter fraud in Florida in 2000. It says that the close 2004 race is raising fears that the Bush campaign will do it again. END SUMMARY.

HEADLINE AND FULL TEXT

¶12. DIARIO VEA (pro-government, circ. 25,000)
10/22 lead editorial headline: "The Robbery of the Century"

Selected Quotes: "George Bush's fall in the opinion polls has created a fear among many American that the rightist-fundamentalists will put into effect new machinations in order to repeat the election fraud of November 7, 2000. That was no fraud but rather a scandalous robbery. Bush's friends paid to have all voters 'suspected' of having a criminal record scrubbed from the voter list in Florida. At one stroke George Bush's brother, Jeb Bush, the governor of Florida, eliminated thousands of Democratic Party voters, 173,000 to be exact. Among these were those who had already completed their sentences or who had committed crimes such as illegal parking or marijuana possession.

"Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, lost his advantage due to the cheating and falsifications carried out by George W. Bush.. Significant bribes financed by large corporations cleared the way for the occupation of the White House by the interests of the American ultra-right and their policy of 'permanent war.'

COMMENT

¶15. The Chavez administration and the Chavistas have been stung by the continuous opposition claims of fraud in the August 15 referendum and the opposition's belief that the October 31 regional elections will be marred by fraud. This editorial is making the concealed point that the United States is in no position to judge voter fraud in Venezuela. In his most recent "Alo Presidente" TV program, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said "the people of the United States will decide [the presidential elections], at least I hope that it will be the people of the United States that decide." End Comment.

Brownfield

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